



CAPTAIN BLOOD

by Rafael Sabatini
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CHAPTER I

The Messenger

Peter Blood, bachelor of medicine and several other things besides, smoked a pipe and tended the geraniums boxed on the sill of his window above Water Lane in the town of Bridgewater.

Mr. Blood's attention was divided between his task and the stream of humanity in the narrow street below, pouring for the second time that day in the direction of Castle Field, where earlier in the afternoon Ferguson, the Duke's chaplain, had preached a sermon that contained more treason than divinity.

Bridgewater, like Tanton, had yielded generously of its manhood to the service of the Duke.

Peter Blood had read the absurd proclamation posted at the Cross at Bridgewater—as it had been posted also at Tanton and elsewhere—setting forth that "upon the decease of our Sovereign Lord Charles, the Second the right of succession to the Crown of England, Scotland, France and Ireland with the dominions and territories thereto belonging, did legally descend and devolve upon the most illustrious and high-born Prince James Duke of Monmouth, son and heir apparent to the said King Charles the Second."

Mr. Blood knocked the ashes from his pipe, closed the window and drew the curtains.

He was the son of an Irish medicus, by a Somersetshire lady in whose veins ran the rover blood of the Frobershams, which may account for a certain wildness that had early manifested itself in his disposition.

A set of curious chances led him to take service with the Dutch, then at war with France; and a predilection for the sea made him elect that this service should be upon that element. He had the advantage of a commission under the famous de Ruyter, and fought in the Mediterranean engagement in which that great Dutch admiral lost his life.

In January, 1685, he had come to Bridgewater, possessor of a fortune that was approximately the same as that with which he had originally set out from Dublin eleven years ago.

That is all his story, or so much of it as matters up to that night, six months later, when the battle of Sedgemoor was fought.

The armies came into collision in the neighborhood of two o'clock.



"IT IS LORD GILDROY," HE PANTED. "HE IS SORE WOUNDED AT OGLETORPE FARM BY THE RIVER."

In the morning, Mr. Blood slept undisturbed through the distant boom of cannon. Not until four o'clock, when the sun was rising to dispel the last wisps of mist over that stricken field of battle, was he awakened from his tranquil slumbers.

There in slanting golden light of the new-risen sun stood a breathless, wild-eyed man and a steaming horse.

In that moment Mr. Blood recognized him for the young shipmaster, Jeremiah Pitt, who had been drawn by the general enthusiasm into the vortex of that rebellion.

"It is Lord Gildoy," he panted. "He is sore wounded. . . . at Ogletorpe's Farm by the river. I bore him thither. . . . and he sent me for you. Make haste, in God's name."

Mr. Blood went off to dress and to fetch a case of instruments.

CHAPTER II

Kirke's Dragoons

Ogletorpe's farm stood a mile or so to the south of Bridgewater in the right bank of the river.

In the spacious, stone-flagged hall the doctor found Lord Gildoy. His cheeks were leaden-hued, his eyes closed, and from his blue lips came with each labored breath a faint moaning noise.

Mr. Blood stood for a moment

silently considering his patient. Then he called for water and linen and what else he needed for his work.

He was still intent upon it a half hour later when the dragoons invaded the homestead. The clatter of hooves and hoarse shouts that heralded their approach disturbed him not at all. But his lordship, who had now recovered consciousness, showed considerable alarm and the battle-stained Jeremy Pitt sped to cover in a clothes-press. Baynes was uneasy.

And then they came rattling and clanking into the stone-flagged hall—a round dozen pack-booted, lobster-coated troopers of the Tangers' Regiment, led by a sturdy, black-browed fellow with a deal of gold lace about the breast of his coat.

"I am Captain Hobart, of Colonel Kirke's dragoons. What rebels do you harbor?"

The yeoman took alarm at that ferocious truculence, it expressed itself in his trembling voice.

"I—I am no harbinger of rebels, sir. This wounded gentleman

"I can see for myself." The Captain stamped forward to the daybed and sent down upon the gray-faced sufferer.

"Out with him, my lads."

Mr. Blood got between the daybed and the troopers.

"In the name of humanity, sir!" said he, on a note of anger. "This is England, not Tangiers. The gentleman is in sore case. He may not be

moved without peril of his life."

Captain Hobart was amused.

"Who the hell may you be?" he exploded.

"My name is Blood, sir—Peter Blood, at your service."

"What brings you here, sir?"

"This wounded gentleman. I was fetched to attend him. I am a physician practicing my calling in the town of Bridgewater."

The Captain sneered. "Which you reached by way of Lyme Regis in the following of your bastard Duke."

It was Mr. Blood's turn to sneer. "If your wit were as big as your voice, my dear, it's the great man you'd be by this."

For a moment the dragoon was speechless. The color deepened in his face.

"You may find me great enough to hang you."

And then his lordship spoke for himself, in a weak voice.

"I make no concealment of my association with the Duke of Monmouth. I'll take the consequences."

But, if you please, I'll take them after trial—by my peers."

"Take up the day-bed," said Captain Hobart, "and convey him on that to Bridgewater. Lodge him in the gaol until I take order about him."

Gildoy made a feeble effort to put forth a hand toward Mr. Blood. "Sir," he said, "you leave me in your debt. If I live I shall study how to discharge it."

As his lordship was carried out, the Captain became brisk. He turned upon the yeoman.

"What other cursed rebels do you harbor?"

"None other, sir. His lordship—"

But the Captain did not heed him. He was stooping to pick up a soiled and dusty hat in which there was pinned a little bunch of oak leaves. It had been lying near the clothes-press in which the unfortunate Pitt had taken refuge.

The Captain smiled malevolently. Then the Captain stepped to the press and pulled open one of the wings of its massive oak door.

He took the huddled inmate by the collar of his doublet and lurched him out into the open.

The soldiers trailed out by the door leading to the interior. Mr. Blood was thrust by his guards into the courtyard. From the threshold of the hall, he looked back at Captain Hobart and his sapphire eyes were blazing.

CHAPTER III

The Lord Chief Justice

It was not until two months later—on the 19th of September—that Peter Blood was brought to trial, upon a charge of high treason. Two months of inhuman, unspeakable imprisonment had moved his mind to a cold and deadly hatred of King James and his representatives.

His chain companion on that march to prison had been the same Jeremy Pitt, who had been

the agent of his present misfortune. The young shipmaster had remained his close companion after their common arrest.

The hall, even to the galleries—thronged with spectators, most of whom were ladies—was hung in scarlet.

At the upper end, on a raised dais, sat the Lord Commissioners, the five judges in their scarlet robes and heavy dark periwigs, Baron Jeffreys of Wem enthroned in the middle place.

The prisoners filed in under guard. Mr. Blood considered with interest the twelve good men and true that composed the jury. Neither good nor true did they look.

From them Mr. Blood's calm, deliberate glance passed on to consider the Lords Commissioners, and particularly the pre-

siding Judge whose terrible face had come ahead of him from Dorchester.

The clerk called upon Andrew Baynes to hold up his hand and plead.

From Baynes, who pleaded not guilty, the clerk passed on to Pitt, who boldly owned his guilt.

The only witness called for the King was Captain Hobart. He testified briskly to the manner in which he had found and taken the three prisoners, together with Lord Gildoy.

As the Captain's evidence concluded, Lord Jeffreys looked across at Peter Blood.

Blood stood boldly forward, erect, self-possessed, and satirical.

"Captain Hobart has testified to what he knows—that he found me at Ogletorpe's Farm on the

Monday morning after the battle of Weston. But he has not told you what I did there."

The Judge broke in. "Why what should you have been doing there in the company of rebels?"

"I was there, my lord, in my quality as a physician, to dress Lord Gildoy's wounds."

"How came you, who represent yourself as a physician, peacefully following your calling in the town of Bridgewater, to be with the army of the Duke of Monmouth?" (Continued in Our Next Issue)

of Mrs. Eleanor L. Brigham, a business man. Mrs. Brigham was discovered late last night in a private closet in her home here. She had been choked to death.

The negro was identified by Margaret Brigham, the dead woman's daughter, as a former employee of the Brigham home. But she denied knowledge of the crime.

NEGRO HELD FOR MURDER OF BUSINESS MAN'S WIFE

ORANGE, N. J., Dec. 23.—William Battles, a negro, was held without bail early today in connection with the killing Thursday

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Men's Work Shirts

of good firm cotton, blue chambray, full cut and extra well made **69c**

Men's Flannel Shirts

Heavy quality, collar attached, pockets, made roomy, will give excellent service; blue and khaki **\$1.59**

Men's Union Suits

Fine ribbed or fleece lined garments that are made for comfort as well as service; special at **\$1.39**

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of fine kid or calf leathers, narrow, medium or broad toes, heavy soles; sizes 13 to 5 **\$2.95**

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of fine brown calf, English and Blucher cut, welt soles, rubber heels. A shoe that will give excellent service **\$3.95**

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